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LONELY PROTEST
—John Cogley

THE

Commonweal

Nineteenth Century Heritage

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION

by J. N. Moody

Rights and Privileges

STATUS OF FORCES

by C. K. Yearley, Jr.

William Blake

MAN WITHOUT A MASK

by Louis Crompton

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

ASPIRATIONS AND REALITIES

HOW SECURE is the society which can not tolerate a non-violent protest against security measures which deeply affect that society and the entire world? How secure, how vital, is the society which maintains a respectable or complacent silence when those who do make the protest are jailed? These are not idle questions meant to while away the time until the demands of reality once again intrude themselves. They have traditionally been the concern of those thinkers who realized that the rights of the non-conformist were a true index of the society. Several recent events should have conspired to force these questions on the minds of most Americans.

The first of these events we have previously discussed, the imprisonment of twelve pacifists led by Dorothy Day, co-founder of the Catholic Worker. These pacifists were jailed because they refused to take shelter during the nation-wide air raid drill on July 12. They refused "as a matter of conscience," as a way of protesting against psychological preparation for total war and as "an act of public penance" for the nation that dropped the first atomic bombs on Japan.

For the third consecutive year they registered their protest, for the third time their civil rights were suspended during a mock emergency, for the third time they were sentenced. And the imprisonment of Dorothy Day—one of the rare great figures of the Church in America—was received largely with silence, as if most people had agreed that it was, after all, only the same, old, ineffective protest. By now Dorothy Day is back at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality, continuing her heroic acts of charity among the outcasts from our society. She has returned from aspirations most people do not share to harsh realities they do not know.

In the week these pacifists were released from prison, another group protested in Nevada. The group, acting under the banner of "Non-Violent Action Against Nuclear Weapons," also clearly stated their position beforehand:

"On August 6th, the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, a group of concerned Americans, having informed the government of their intention, will walk into the nuclear test area in Nevada. This will be an act of civil disobedience against a law of the United States. It is undertaken in a spirit of prayer and from leadings of conscience.

"The law prohibiting entrance to the test site is necessary to the continuance of the tests. To register with our whole lives our concern that nuclear tests be stopped, a number of us will disobey that law. But we disobey it in a spirit of respect for law and democratic authority. We disobey openly; we willingly accept the law's penalty."

THE FULL result of their action is not yet known, but each person is prepared to undergo imprisonment in order to make a protest in accordance with his conscience.

The editors of The Commonweal have supported the nuclear tests, and we have participated in the air raid drills. But we have also questioned the suspension of civil rights during these drills and we have protested the imprisonment of pacifists who are obeying the demands of their conscience. We do not regard our support of nuclear defenses as a choice made between the desirable and the less desirable, or between the good and the bad, but between two severe evils of which we choose the lesser.

The pacifists do not see the choice we do; they would remind us that what we regard as the lesser of two evils is, in an atomic world, monstrous. They

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aspire to an immediate future that we find unrealistic.

During the week Dorothy Day was released and the protest was launched in Nevada, President Eisenhower held a press conference. He was reminded that on June 5 he had said that he "would like to allay anxiety in the world about this problem by a total and complete ban of all testing, with proper safeguards," and that Secretary Dulles had later said that "it is not practicable to assure the abolition of nuclear weapons."

Asked to clarify the apparent contradiction, the President replied: "Well, I expressed an aspiration, and he is expressing some of the realities of the world today . . . I was expressing a very great hope because this is what I believe. The great struggle of our age is to free men of terrible fear . . . men and women all over the world are living in fear of one kind or another, and I think we have got to help raise that burden. So I would repeat the same aspiration, but I don't say that at this moment it is within the realm of practicality."

The opposition which the President stated is meaningful. And those who thoughtfully accept the continued testing of nuclear weapons must believe they are operating within the "realm of practicality." But we cannot be allowed to forget that this is a terrible realm. As, year after year, the horrors of a possible war become more familiar, it becomes easier to exclude them from our conscious, daily affairs. And if we can sleep through the night we need not notice its horrors.

It is at least partially to rouse people from that possible sleep that the pacifists make their protests. They lend the force of their whole beings to the aspiration voiced by the President. Only if we measure the "realm of practicality" against their vision, their aspiration, are we accepting our full responsibility. But today the choices are indeed hard—so hard that it may be easier to ignore their heroic challenge. This, at least, would account for the poverty of the protest that greeted the imprisonment of Dorothy Day and the other pacifists.

NEXT WEEK

THE COMMONWEAL will publish a special issue on the Lay Apostolate.

LOUIS J. PUTZ discusses the layman's role in the Church today with special emphasis on the task of building a Christian social order.

DENNIS J. GEANEY writes about various forms of the Lay Apostolate which have developed as a result of needs in our American society.

LYDWINE VAN KERSBERGEN tells of the comparatively recent phenomenon of lay missionaries and the opportunities for personal dedication in the underdeveloped areas of the world.

DEVELOPMENT FUND

WHEN THE UNESCO, meeting in Geneva, voted for the setting up of a special UN fund for the underdeveloped countries, the United States, Canada and Great Britain provided the only opposition. They proved unequal to defeating a resolution which places the proposal on the Assembly agenda in New York next month. In the interval it would seem that the opponents of this measure will need to build up a more convincing case than they have succeeded in presenting so far, if they are to block the proposal in the UN.

As the United States, which would be the largest contributor to such a fund, has all along been its principal adversary, re-examination of our reasons would seem to be in order. One of these is American (and British) preference for development loans and grants-in-aid via bilateral agreement. But more and more nations dislike the prospect of economic and political tutelage—a relationship they consider inevitable when they accept American aid on this basis. And one of the biggest points at issue is precisely whether an international agency would be able to exercise sufficient controls to keep the loans and grants that would be extended from being utilized to enrich local officials or to work directly against the interests of the free world.

One of our delegates at Geneva stuck to the formula that disarmament would have to precede any such measures to build up farm and industry and living standards—that it should be the very savings derived from cuts in arms appropriations which should be used to assure better lives for many peoples. The transforming of war implements into plowshares has always exerted a powerful attraction; and this does seem to be a dramatic way of pointing out how much better off the peoples of the world would be if the burden of armaments were lifted from their shoulders. But when the millions envisaged as the American contribution to such a fund are measured against the billions required for our arms budget year after year, it is not clear why one has to depend upon the other.

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The truth is that support for aid to the underdeveloped countries has never been strong here in the United States. Only the other day, for example, the House of Representatives knocked out a provision for long-term assistance in the Mutual Security bill which had been passed by the Senate—a modification much to the displeasure of President Eisenhower. Americans as a whole seem little moved by the possibility of attacking poverty, illiteracy and disease in the world, or even of supplying depressed peoples with means to work toward our own vaunted living standards. Most of us seem to believe that in an age of extraordinary intercommunication we can go on living in comparative ease, while the majority of our fellow-men remain content to be deprived of a chance to earn a decent livelihood. American delegates to various UN meetings seldom exceed official instructions. In a democracy such as ours such instructions are formulated with at least one eye to dominant public opinion. A more enlightened policy therefore appears unlikely without the impetus of marked public demand.

AMBASSADORS

THERE WERE summers in the Coolidge era before the crash when it seemed that American tourists could hardly go far enough to be insulting. It was before the depreciation of the dollar, and French paper money, although worth many times what it is today, seemed particularly plentiful to young visitors who were making their one and only European tour. No real harm was meant when they lighted cigars from ten-franc banknotes or pasted French currency of various denominations all over the walls of their train compartments, but the damage was incalculable. For some, the reputation of the U. S. has never quite recovered.

American visitors in Europe today are necessarily of a more sober stamp. The world has gone through too much in the past twenty-five years to produce the carefree attitudes of yesteryear. Tensions now are too great. And yet Americans come to many lands to be fed and wined and entertained in a manner which befits those with the power to command such entertainment. Many of them cannot help feeling as young lords of all they survey—even in the midst of the cultural treasures of past ages and creative and appreciative instincts which are often much more highly developed than their own. Incidents would seem to be unavoidable, envy and resentment frequent in an atmosphere where anti-American feeling seems always ready to flare up.

The fact that a letter from the President is currently being sent along from the State Department with all American passports is all to the good. It is not always easy to remember that one is inevitably representing his country these days when he is abroad. If this reminder that the voyager actually represents the United States could be followed up by pertinent facts on the countries to be visited, issued along with each visa, even more could be done to foster mutual understanding and goodwill. Perhaps the steamship companies and airlines could serve as agencies for distributing an abundance of cultural material. Travel presents rich opportunities as well as pitfalls.

VOX POPULI

THE OTHER day, when we were home sick, we were introduced to the unknown (to us) world of daytime television. It was an unnerving experience. The devotion of American women to soap opera is a profoundly depressing cultural fact—and the televised versions of the art form which we saw were hopelessly like the radio prototype—but it was not soap opera which affected us so.

There are daytime programs on TV whose sheer corruptive power makes the soap opera seem ennobling in comparison. Many of these programs "entertain" by presenting spectacles of human beings pitifully maimed by life's slings and arrows, and pouring out their naked grief for the delectation of their fellow men. The teller of the most heart-rending story receives a prize.

But one program has gone far beyond mere vicious sentimentalism by wedding the same impulse to a perverted democratic ritualism. On this program, people bring their miseries to a studio audience, and to millions watching at home, and ask advice. Those asked for advice—the studio audience—are specifically and proudly *not* experts. They have no special knowledge or experience in the problems brought up, and this is precisely the point. They are the "man in the street" (actually they are almost all women); they are the People.

The proper understanding of the problem at hand—having to do with love, marriage, illness, bereavement—and the right course of action The Sufferer should take, are decided upon in a grotesque parody of democracy in action. The clamor of voices, the volume of applause, the computation of votes (by electronic calculator, of course): these, it is suggested, are the avenues to truth.

What we have described happens every week,

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at least; millions of Americans find it unremarkable except that it gives them pleasure; and it sells soap. But to us it seemed an ugly and forbidding display of everything to be feared in a democratic culture. We were struck by the pitiful eagerness of the mass man to make himself heard, jostling and elbowing to tell the world what *he* thinks, insisting belligerently that his opinion—no matter how ignorant—is as good as anybody else's. Then, after the gesture of independence, came the slavish surrender to the will of the herd, with the most strident voices completely silenced by the weight of popular opinion. We were appalled at the mystic faith displayed in a machine which counted the votes, the unquestioning acceptance of the statistical formula for arriving at truth.

This last—the extension of the method of political democracy to every area of life—is perhaps the most pernicious tendency of a democratic society. This subservience to the weight of numbers is what debases taste, manners, morals, the understanding of the nature of truth. It is the same muddled veneration of "norms" and "majorities" which lay beneath the reams of foolishness written, some years back, on the Kinsey Report.

Perhaps we exaggerate the significance of television programs like these and similar phenomena observable in American life. Perhaps we are too easily alarmed. We hope so. But exaggerated or not, these tendencies exist as constant threats in the development of a democratic society. They have been seized upon by the enemies of democracy; they cannot with safety be ignored by its friends.

IMPORT LESS OIL!

ONE THING that appears certain for at least the immediate future is steadily increasing demand for oil. This is currently reflected by rising production in all fields outside the United States. The number of American companies with foreign sources is also noticeably on the increase and an indicator of lower foreign production costs. Independent domestic producers have become increasingly restive about the fact that they are confronted by a shrinking demand. Wells are down to operating but thirteen days per month in Texas, a state that accounts for forty-five per cent of our domestic oil production.

It is in response to these producers' demands that Mr. Eisenhower has called for the "voluntary" cut in oil imports, except for the West Coast. And to back up the advisability of such a step the President could point out that domestic exploration for new sources is now on the decline. He could argue that the United States is becoming too dependent on foreign oil and proven reserves to be prepared for the exigencies of a major war.

Similar attempts to restrict imports have failed in the past when there were but one-fourth as many companies importing oil as there are at present. In this instance there are important qualitative and quantitative exceptions that make such an "agreement" particularly difficult to enforce. The Department of the Interior has already sent out letters about compliance to the leading oil companies, one of which has already lodged a vigorous protest. Here is a situation in which defense needs, the requirements of domestic and foreign producers, the American consumer and good international relations all have to be taken into account. Even to establish a mandatory formula that would give each of these key factors due weight would be no mean accomplishment.

EXCHANGE IN MOSCOW

THE FIRST Youth Festival held in Moscow was officially ignored by the United States. The State Department, in fact, discouraged young Americans from making the trip. In spite of the discouragement at least one hundred and sixty Americans attended the festival. The complete results are not yet known—and may never be. For it is not easy to measure the consequences of an exchange of ideas.

The group of Americans contained, evidently, the usual quota of those who seize the opportunity for an inexpensive good time. There were also some who went to confirm their ties with the Communist groups. But there were others who went to inform as well as to be informed.

Among the last group of Americans were those who told surprised Russians that Howard Fast had resigned from the Communist Party with regretful, devastating criticism. They also read and discussed the UN report on Soviet brutality in Hungary. In addition they offered information about the living conditions of students and workers in the free world.

It is possible that greater American participation would have been even more effective. But such things are difficult to judge and the hands-off attitude of the State Department may prove to have been the best course to follow. But it is already evident that the exchange of information gave Soviet youth something new to think about.

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Socialism and Religion

"IT IS NOT 'CHURCH' AND 'STATE' WHICH ARE IN CONFLICT, BUT CITIZENS OF BASICALLY DIFFERENT OPINIONS"

J. N. MOODY

NO PEOPLE CAN escape its past, and Europeans are still under the spell of their nineteenth century intellectual heritage. The events of our time have demanded a drastic revision of inherited positions, but basic re-examination of attitudes is a disappointingly slow process, even where necessity suggests speed. It is not surprising that Europeans are still at odds on issues which have little relation to existing reality, especially in the important segment of continental labor which has been influenced by Marxism. Here, and in the wider circles that cherish the memory of the Church-State conflict of the past, we find a deeply rooted anti-clericalism that colors all aspects of working class activity. Responsible observers deplore this prejudice as irrelevant in the contemporary context, but wise analysis does not automatically produce desirable change.

An ideal area for the study of the interrelation of inherited ideology and social fact is Belgium. This small country was not only the first area on the continent to be industrialized, but its strategic position has opened it to influences from every side, and its cultural division between Flemish- and French-speaking halves has added an interesting dimension for the observations of the social historian.

In contemporary Belgium there seems to be some possibility of a partial reconciliation of Democratic Socialism with Christian social thinking. The Socialist Party is one of the two major political forces in the nation, and it has strong working class support. But it has not won a monopoly of the labor movement. Christian trade unionism is vigorous and increasing in strength, and there is a variety of other agencies of Christian inspiration that provide a fairly strong counterweight to Marxist influence. This dynamic factor in Belgian society and politics has inspired the Socialists to re-examine their traditional attitude toward religion. Something has obviously gone wrong when a notable minority of workers have retained their religious convictions after nearly a century of Marxist propaganda.

Father Moody is a member of the faculty at Notre Dame College of Staten Island, New York.

Since World War II, Belgian Socialists have been engaged in considerable soul-searching in regard to religion. Study groups have been convened for discussion of the issue and much has been written in Socialist journals. Several leading intellectuals of the Party have adopted a moderate tone that is in sharp contrast with that employed by their predecessors. Catholics have responded in kind, and rational discussion has been possible on this level. But the actual policies of the Socialist Party have not been influenced by this new approach. In fact, the political and trade union rivalry between Socialist and Christian seems to have grown sharper. The conflict over the school question, acute since the Socialist-Liberal coalition took over after the elections of 1954, has intensified bitterness.

DESPITE THIS SETBACK on the level of practical politics, the dialogue has continued. Belgian Catholics are interested, because they are aware that their apostolate is handicapped as long as the rigid division remains. Belgian Socialists are more free to explore the possibilities of *rapprochement* because of the marginal position of the Communist Party in the country. The French Socialists, with only a tenuous hold on the industrial workers, would be unable—even if they wished—to dilute their old anti-clericalism. Were they to do so, the Communists would raise the issue for tactical purposes, and there would be danger that the Socialist rank and file would be drained off to the Extreme Left. The absence of a strong Communist body in Belgium releases the Socialists from this possibility.

The rivalry of Socialism and Communism, both stemming from the same source in Marx, is more than tactical. The emergence of Democratic Socialism was in part the logical consequence of the appearance of mass Marxist parties. Millions of workers could not be kept faithful to a party which spurned gradual reforms in favor of revolutionary objectives which might never be realized. In part it was an index of the failure of Marx's somber prophecies to come to pass in an age of expanding capitalism.

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But Democratic Socialism also revealed the uneasiness of working class leaders in the late nineteenth century with a determinist theory that made history an absolute, the measure of all justice and injustice, of all good and evil. Democratic Socialism retained the framework of economic determinism, but widened the ambivalence already present in Marx by placing a greater accent on liberty. To the Belgian Socialists of the late nineteenth century man was too complex to reduce him to an economic formula. But their emphasis on moral factors did not include any relaxation of their hostility toward religion.

Democratic Socialists went further in their revision of the strand of Marxist opinion known as "orthodox." This latter had been extremely optimistic in regard to the final outcome of the social conflict. It held that a Utopia would be gained in which all class conflicts would be resolved and full social peace achieved, once private property had been appropriated and placed at the disposal of all. But it was pessimistic in regard to means: such an enormous transfer of wealth and power could not be brought about without revolution. The Democratic Socialists, in Belgium and elsewhere, transposed this optimism from the domain of ends to that of means. No longer would revolution be necessary to reach the goal. It could be achieved peacefully, step by step, by concentrating on immediate gains for the working class and by postponing the final transfer of all productive property to an undetermined future. This "reformist" Marxism did not disavow the ultimate classless society; but, as its critics declared, it pushed it beyond the terrain of practical politics. The Democratic Socialists could luxuriate in the theory of class conflict without being called to put it to the test. An old cartoon in the German press, showing a Social Democratic militant sitting contentedly under a tree with his beer and sausage while he dreamed of a distant earthly paradise, is a fair summary of Socialist reality.

Because Socialism is so complex a phenomenon and because its inherited anti-clericalism is not necessary for the accomplishment of its practical aims, it is essential that it be studied by competent Catholics when it makes tentative moves toward *rapprochement*. One such is certainly Monsignor A. Brys, Chaplain General of the Christian Working Class Movement in Belgium. He has recently written an important book, *Socialisme et Religion en Belgique*, which discusses the present status of Socialist-Catholic relations in his country. He has dealt with the problem both on the theoretical and practical sides, and he is thoroughly informed. As Catholic spokesman in an area in which competition with the Socialists is most sharp, he tries hard to be fair. His small volume deserves the attention of anyone concerned with the problems of Europe in the present day.

MONSIGNOR BRYS begins with the premise that Catholics and Socialists must co-exist as fellow-citizens. This has been facilitated by new currents within Belgian Socialism, and by a new uncertainty in regard to the content of Socialism itself. The International Socialist Congress, meeting at Frankfort in July 1951, included the following in its General Declaration of Principles: "Socialism is an international movement which does not demand a rigid conceptual uniformity. Socialists can base their convictions on Marxism or on other methods of analysis. They may be inspired by religious or humanitarian principles. But all struggle for a common end: a system of social justice, a better life, liberty, and peace." Such a Socialism would obviously not be in theoretical conflict with religion.

But the whole truth is not contained in such declarations. There is the hard fact that Socialism in Belgium has been an active agent of de-Christianization among the workers. There is the further fact that the overwhelming majority of Belgian Socialists are practical atheists, and that the policies of the Party have reflected little of the new mood which has been adopted by some of its intellectuals. On the operational level the attitude toward religion is much closer to the view which obtained at the beginning of the century, when hostility to Christianity was frankly stated.

To define this attitude, Monsignor Brys quotes liberally from the Socialist leader E. Vandervelde, who discussed the problem in his *Essais socialistes* (Paris. F. Alcan. 1906). Vandervelde saw little possibility of finding an arrangement "where one is a Catholic for the things of heaven and a Socialist for the affairs of earth," for neither Catholicism nor Socialism could accept such a rigid exclusion into domains that could be only abstractly separated. For him, the genesis of the conflict between Catholicism and Socialism was the doctrine of original sin, by which "the Catholic Church explains and justifies suffering, enslavement to work, and the perpetuation of poverty." On this ground, according to Vandervelde, the Church holds it is impossible to banish social inequality or social classes, and all efforts for social justice are condemned in advance, as true justice can be found only in a future world. Further, the Church condemns the expropriation of capitalist property. Thus, for a Socialist to be a Catholic is a logical contradiction and a practical impossibility.

The Socialist Party must work, Vandervelde held, for a complete separation of Church and State, which for him meant an absolute secularization of public services, notably welfare and education. It must also carry on the fight against "clericalism," which he defined as "the pretention of the ecclesiastical authorities to extend their teaching power to the social and political realm." All invasions of the Church into

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the temporal field must be repulsed, he said. Immediate steps to this end would be to bring religion under a strict application of the common law. It should be given no public aid nor permitted property beyond what is necessary for worship. A universal public school system, without religious instruction, should be established, and clerical charity should be made unnecessary by full social security. These steps would not of themselves destroy "clericalism," which would persist until the religious faith which nourishes it withered, but this would occur when workers were economically liberated and private property destroyed. Meanwhile, Socialists should use the propaganda of example—the complete refusal to attend religious ceremonies—and the propaganda of education, which would lead the child to see the incompatibility of supernatural belief and the experimental sciences.

CERTAINLY there could be no collaboration between Socialism and religion within the context of these ideas. But a change occurred after the first World War. Considerable political collaboration between the Socialist and Catholic parties led to a more moderate view in some Socialist writers. Typical of this more benign approach was Jules Destrée (*Introduction à la vie socialiste*. Brussels. Eglantine. 1929). For this author, religion was a human creation which reflects the convictions of a past age rather than the human hopes of the present. But it remains a social force, and anti-religious propaganda should not be undertaken by Socialists, for it acts as a brake on Party growth among believing workers.

In this view, while religion need not be destroyed, Socialism could not be indifferent to the area of human interest that lies beyond the economic. For Socialism is more than economic doctrine. Economic emancipation cannot be attained if it be not accompanied by an intellectual and moral development. "It is here that conflict arises, for all churches claim a monopoly of morality. In practice the issues between Christians and Socialists are: private versus collective property; work as a curse of original sin versus work as a socially useful activity; the indissolubility of marriage versus divorce; religious education versus the secularized public school; 'yellow' workers associations versus free trade unions."

Hence, Destrée went on, there is no conflict between Socialism and religion, but struggle is inevitable between Socialists and religious people. Yet a Catholic worker can be a Socialist and it should not be made impossible for him to join the Party. Nor is it improbable that democrats, Socialist and Christian, should adopt common solutions to problems.

Since the second World War, a number of Belgian Socialists have gone further. The Senator Pierre Vermeylen, in his *Socialisme et la religion* (*Socialisme*, No. 3, 1951) sees the Belgian Catholic movement as moving closer to the Socialist position and discovering a new dynamic which has brought it in touch with modern reality. "Yet, although behind the Catholic and Socialist programs there is the same reality, although they may both attempt to satisfy the same desires, their impact on the public is different. For the ideas which they express are basically distinct. The Socialists are inspired by infinite hope in human solidarity, a hope dictated as much by the heart as by reason, and by a profound confidence in man's capabilities. The Catholics, in contrast, are inclined to a humility which makes them accept servitude and cling to outworn traditions."

Despite this incompatibility, Christians and Socialists have collaborated in Britain and Scandinavia. Vermeylen believes they might do so in Belgium. He is sympathetic with the churches' interest in social and political matters, for he concedes that they exist in a real world and that their spiritual aims are affected by actual conditions. But while a church could give guidance to its faithful in these matters, it must not, he says, intervene on the practical level in economics or politics, for a church is not the conscience of the State, and the State must be freed from clerical tutelage. It is of particular importance, in his thesis, that a church claim no special privilege such as state aid in its educational efforts. Nor must it seek legislative prohibitions against divorce and cremation, nor aim to impose a religious oath in public affairs.

Vermeylen believes that the greatest possibility of conflict lies in the sphere of practical politics. In economic theory he sees no fundamental incompatibility between Socialism and Catholicism: the papal encyclicals have condemned capitalism and Catholics have proved themselves interested in social justice. But he has these fears: the Catholic Church has never disavowed its intention to dominate the entire life of the individual and that of the State, she does not really trust democracy, and she remains suspicious of the rule of the masses. Thus she readily adjusts herself to an autocratic system such as that of Franco and feels uneasy in a republic. By fighting Socialism, Vermeylen declares, she has merely assured that its advance has

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resulted in de-Christianization. Were she to withdraw her opposition and change her political direction, she would find it easy, he says, to get along with Socialists.

MONSIGNOR BRYS analyzes the general direction of Socialist thought in twentieth century Belgium and notes that, except for its economic doctrine, it inherits the views of the radical bourgeois liberalism of the nineteenth century. Thus its anti-clericalism is not directed against the abuse of ecclesiastical power, such as is found even among Catholics. It goes beyond this to deny to Catholic citizens, who accept the teachings of the Church, the right to express themselves freely in the public forum. When Socialists claim that they are tolerant of religion as long as it remains a private affair, they mean that they will accept it as a vague religious sentiment that does not propose itself as objective truth and that does not influence public life. This is apparent in the inflexible position taken by the Belgian Socialist Party on the school question.

Monsignor Brys concludes on a note of cautious hope. It is not "Church" and "State" which are in conflict, but citizens of basically different opinions. The citizens can collaborate for the common good if they accept and practice a pluralism that is the only solution for a divided society. This would involve a system of free play which would exclude all state pressure on the spiritual freedom of citizens, and leave to their free initiative the establishment of organizations and institutions that correspond with their philosophy.

Unfortunately, since this book has been published, the 1957 Lenten Pastoral of Cardinal Van Roey, the primate of Belgium, has precipitated increased Socialist-Catholic tension. The Cardinal was writing against the Communist suppression in Hungary, and mentioned that Belgium could learn lessons from Budapest. This evoked a furor in the Belgian Socialist press, which accused the Cardinal of equating Democratic Socialism with Communism. When one reads these bitter articles one is aware that, despite some real amelioration, the heritage of the nineteenth century remains to plague us.

RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

Status of Forces

C. K. YEARLEY, JR.

IMPROVISATION of a worldwide network of American alliances and the progressive development of American bases overseas have necessitated our entrance into Status of Forces Agreements with friendly powers. Beginning first with Britain, France, and the other NATO nations in 1953, the State Department negotiated, and the Senate subsequently ratified, forty of these treaties, or very similar administrative agreements, with foreign governments. Such agreements cover Belgian, Canadian, or German forces who are training inside the United States just as they affect American forces serving in South Korea or Italy; hence for the most part they are reciprocal. Yet the extent and the onus of our defense commitments cause them to involve nearly seven hundred thousand Americans—far more, indeed, than any other Allied personnel.

Basically, Status of Forces Agreements define certain procedures, obligations, and amenities that are to be observed by "foreign" troops and their civilian components stationed within the host state. As a consequence, they generally deal with several important, if seemingly commonplace, matters: use of military facilities, housing, settlement of claims and damages, licensing of motor vehicles, taxation, duties, personal identification and, most significantly, the handling of on- and off-duty infractions of American laws and the laws of the host country.

Stripped of technicalities, these treaties, signed by equals, are arrangements of convenience and courtesy. They are simply house rules voluntarily acceded to by visiting troops at the request of their host. The receiving government tries to make the guests welcome and militarily comfortable, insisting at the same time that the visitors shall neither violate the sovereignty of the host nor otherwise behave badly. In the past there have been alternatives to such treaties which, in effect, permitted a few great powers literally to invite themselves into other states and continue to conduct their affairs as if their nationals were still in the homeland. Asians, particularly, nurse sore memories of these procedures, and while the circumstances were not entirely analogous, Americans may recall the difficulties that we ourselves had long ago with the British troops in Boston.

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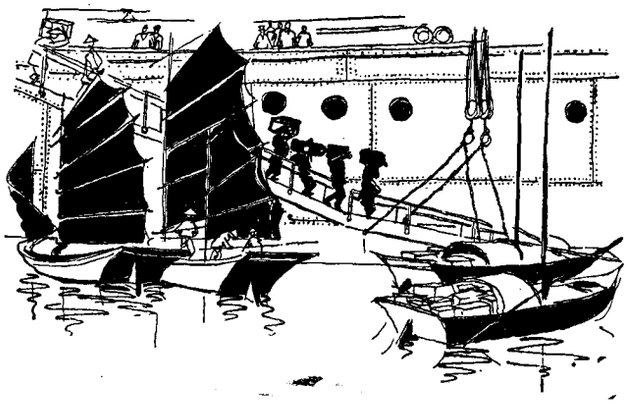
But the now celebrated Girard case reminds us of the exquisite delicacy of our overseas position even under the aegis of Status of Forces Agreements. Moreover, it has precipitated both here and abroad fresh controversy about the attitudes, rights, and relationships between our forces and the peoples among whom they are stationed. It has likewise fixed attention on the most vulnerable and, in some respects, unclear provisions of the status agreements, specifically those pertaining to legal jurisdiction—who shall try whom and under what circumstances.

THE GIRARD AFFAIR amply illustrates the kind of problem that, despite diplomatic precautions, inevitably arises between individuals and governments. Very briefly, Army Specialist Girard accidentally killed a peasant woman scavenging for cartridge cases on a firing range being used by American forces in Japan. Army authorities, acting under our agreement with Japan, initially decided that Girard's offense had been committed while he was on duty, thus placing his case under American military jurisdiction. The Japanese, however, soon presented evidence of their own, which, along with the changed testimony of a soldier witness, indicated that Girard without orders had lured the woman closer to him in order to frighten her. In the Japanese view this made the incident an off-duty offense subject to Japanese law.

Japan's decision to press matters warrants special notice since previously, even in instances when American offenders were by treaty definition unquestionably within Japanese jurisdiction, Japan had freely turned over the vast majority of them to American military courts for trial. Doubtless the new Japanese position reflected the apparent lessening of world tensions, rising national sensitivity, and growing demands, not only in Japan but also in South Korea and Formosa, that Americans yield up some of the privileges granted them earlier, or even withdraw entirely. Similar feelings have exploded recently in Iceland and to a less extent in West Germany, but they are keener in colonial-conscious Asia than in Europe. And it is not unreasonable further to speculate that the case was used to strengthen the hand of Japanese Prime Minister Kishi, who was then preparing to travel to Washington in search of concessions.



Against this background, under pressure from Japan, the Army, perhaps after consultation with the State Department, reversed its stand. As allowed by provisions in our Status of Forces Agreement it gave "sympathetic consideration" to the Japanese case and waived primary jurisdiction over Girard, thereby releasing him for trial by a Japanese court. Relatives and sympathizers argued vociferously that Girard was being "thrown to the dogs"—a remark which unfortunately many Japanese took to be insulting—and the case was taken before a Federal judge, who sustained the soldier's contention that he belonged under American jurisdiction.

But early in July the Supreme Court unanimously sustained Defense and State Department contentions, preserving at least a vital part of the status agreements —and a great deal more besides—from destruction. Mindful, no doubt, of the context in which the affair had occurred, sensible of the stakes at issue, the High Court ruled specifically that neither the Constitution nor legislation enacted after the signing of our treaty with Japan prevented the United States from voluntarily waiving jurisdiction over troops stationed in Japan for offenses against the laws of both countries. The Court thereby, insofar as it could, avoided a situation which would jeopardize several hundred American bases abroad and, at a critical time, impugn the integrity of our national pledges.

GIRARD MEANWHILE awaits trial by a Japanese judge. Under our treaty the United States will provide for his defense and guarantee him certain basic procedural rights. In practice, if previous cases are an accurate index, he may well fare better at the hands of the Japanese court than he would in an American court-martial.

But the dust is not yet laid and Girard's unlucky shot still reverberates around the world. Proponents of the present Status of Forces Agreements argue that whatever facilities or courtesies are granted us overseas, whether in Europe or in Asia, come not really as rights but as privileges conferred by another sovereign state. They insist, many of them on the basis of experience, that the drafting of treaties designed to secure our military position in these countries would be infinitely more difficult, perhaps impossible, without their present provisions. Any refutation of our signed word, they say, would seriously shake the faith of our allies, and encourage them to bargain for changes which they themselves would like to include in the present treaty arrangements. Finally, a great many men of this persuasion undoubtedly fear that any

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disregard of our word would lead back to a more capricious brand of diplomacy, which, given the frequency of elections, the power of pressure groups, and the Senate, appears much too capricious as it is.

Opponents of the status agreements tend to fasten on parts of Article VII of the original NATO agreements and Article XVII of our special treaty with Japan as the main offending provisions. In essence they insist that draftees who are involuntarily obliged to serve overseas (Girard enlisted) are unfairly subject not to one but two legal jurisdictions. The effects of this, they suggest, are pernicious: it destroys morale because men carrying out orders are uncertain of their legal status; it subjects them to unreasonable hazards, and, still more generally, it deprives them of their Constitutional rights. On a broader front, however, those who challenge portions of these articles have fanned into flame the long simmering debate as to whether domestic law should, in cases of conflict, override treaties—the Bricker Amendment being the latest manifestation of this by no means recent point of view.

For the moment, despite official blunders and acrimonious debate, our international pledges in the Status of Forces Treaties remain intact. We have, unfortunnately, no reason to doubt that cases similar to Girard's will continue to arise and plague us. But the strength of nationalism, the disappearance of colonialism and, for the United States at least, the unprecedented complexity of the international situation make the only alternative to such agreements—the rights of extra-territoriality—utterly impossible today.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Man Without a Mask

LOUIS CROMPTON

TO THE READER of William Blake in this bicentennial year of his birth two facts must appear as near-miracles: there is the primary miracle of his existence, and the secondary miracle that the world at large ever came to know of him. No poet and artist ever disappeared more completely from view at the time of his death than Blake did. Shortly afterwards a reviewer found it possible to dismiss him contemptuously as an "extraordinary lunatic" whose art was devoted to "wild and absurd visions."

If a young Scot named Alexander Gilchrist had not happened in 1860 to hit on him as a subject for a biography, Blake might have remained in obscurity forever. Even by then, the vestiges of his very dim contemporary reputation had all but vanished, and Gilchrist's book communicates something of the uneasy tentativeness of a man groping in a dark room for an animal of unknown breed. When Gilchrist died with his work unfinished it looked as if the thread might finally be lost. Luckily, interest had by that time spread to a coterie: Dante Gabriel and William Michael Rossetti, Samuel Palmer and Swinburne worked with Mrs. Gilchrist to complete the book, and within a year's time the response of the great Victorian reviews had made the revival of interest in Blake a national project.

Mr. Crompton teaches English at the University of Nebraska. This is his first appearance in The Commonweal.

Geoffrey Keynes's handsome new edition of the letters (*The Letters of William Blake*. Ed. by Geoffrey Keynes. Macmillan. $10.) does not add any significant new chapter to the romance of Blake's resuscitation. The canon of Blake's correspondence remains roughly what it was fifty years ago: even the mysterious "catalogue" letters have failed to reappear, a fact that no one regrets more than the conscientious editor. The scholar will be thankful for the care and completeness of the editing; the general reader, pondering the mystery of Blake's career, may be inspired to make another shot at identifying the animal.

The verdicts to date have been bewilderingly varied. Blake has been called "a naive child," "the last civilized man," "a Methodist saint," "a poet of the devil's party." On his rediscovery he was condemned as a "stalking horse for revolutionary propaganda," and praised as a model of Victorian piety. He was, in literary terms, both canonized and bowdlerized, an odd fate, but perhaps an appropriate one for the prophet who set out to officiate at the marriage of heaven and hell.

The twentieth century has gone on to compound the confusion. G. B. Shaw declared that Blake had anticipated the diabolonian ethics of Nietzsche. W. H. Auden sees the central ideas of Freud implicit in the *Marriage*, while John Crowe Ransom has impishly complained that "poor Willy Blake foundered on sweet

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cake." Marxists have found him as clever as Marx, and post-Marxist economists a good deal cleverer, in his analysis of the psychology of economic imperialism. Jungian critics have had a field day with the prophetic works, those eternally tantalizing puzzles of the literary detective, with their patches of blazing brilliance. Catholic criticism, which at first shied away from Blake with a kind of fascinated horror, has within the last generation produced the most impressive studies of his religious experience. Pre-Raphaelites, aesthetes, and *fin de siècle* symbolist poets have used his ideas as springboards to launch whole literary movements. What are we to make of this buried and forgotten root which has sent up enough posthumous shoots to create a veritable forest?

THIS WIDE range of attention should not suggest that interest in Blake is constant or general, even in literary circles. It isn't. Eighteenth-century specialists in colleges are apt to close their surveys, with evident relief, a moment before his arrival, and courses in the Romantics to begin with Wordsworth, with only cursory apologies. "O why was I born with a different face!" Blake lamented in his own lifetime, and the fact remains that he still refuses to fit in neatly. This would be awkward if his eccentricity were not part of his peculiar value. At one moment he looks like a contemporary of Pico della Mirandola or Henry More strayed incongruously into the age of the French Revolution, at the next like the most contemporary of our contemporaries. A taste for Blake is as little innate in the human race as a taste for Picasso. He is being constantly discovered, lost, and retrieved, like some small, precious, slippery object. The growth of his reputation has been less a gradually widening acceptance than a series of shocks and explosions as one receptive mind after another has been brought into contact with his art and writings. The struggle to identify and possess him finally remains as challenging a test of our culture as ever.

Gilchrist labeled Blake a "mystic," thinking this a term broad enough to cover any strange specimen. True enough, Blake had written "I am in God's presence night & day, And he never turns his face away." But where is the mystic's traditional humility? Looking for an honorific title that would do justice to his sense of self-esteem he settled for nothing less than "I, William Blake, a Mental Prince." He was quite capable of patronizing God on occasion.

Moreover, the heavenly commands were sufficiently predetermined in nature: "Write, Paint, Engrave, Do not compromise." Perhaps, one is tempted to think, instead of a second Milton divinely commissioned to rewrite *Paradise Lost,* we have really an embryo Yeats. Mrs. Yeats, when asked whether her husband believed in his "system," is reported to have replied that Willy would have stolen the wings off the back of an angel if he'd thought it would help his poetry. Is Blake an earlier angel-thief? The answer is no: a note scribbled in the fly-leaf of Spurzheim's "Insanity" shows the abyss of anguish that underlay the airy manner: "Cowper came to me and said: 'O that I were insane always. I will never rest. Can you not make me truly insane? I will never rest till I am so. O that in the bosom of God I was hid. You retain health and yet are as mad as any of us all—over us all—mad as a refuge from unbelief—from Bacon, Newton, and Locke.' "

This conflict between faith and skepticism is passionately real. Tennyson's "honest doubt" inspired Blake with pure terror. The analogy with the later poet is possibly instructive. His brother Robert's death seems to have thrown Blake into the same confusion and despair Hallam's did Tennyson. A psychologist might diagnose a fixation: Blake later declared that his poetry was written at Robert's dictation and that Robert had communicated to him the new technical method by which he engraved his writings. But he is far from Tennyson's bland humorlessness. The tiger of destruction glowers wrathfully in the *Songs of Experience.* Asked by the credulous Varley to sketch a portrait at a seance Blake produced the scarifying "Ghost of a Flea."

Nor is he the simple-minded primitivist some critics —notably Irving Babbitt in his *Rousseau and Romanticism*—have taken him to be. Blake's demand for absolute moral freedom was made full in the face of his rejection of Voltaire and Rousseau's optimistic view of human nature. The champion of the Gospel in the age of reason, he was just as willing to scourge a smug Christian as a smug philosopher. Reading Bishop Wilson's suavely sanctimonious pamphlet, "On the Wisdom of God in Creating Both Rich and Poor," Blake declared that it made the Bishop's adversary, Tom Paine, look, by comparison, like a divinely inspired prophet. Woe to those, cried Blake, who would "Compell the poor to live on a crust of bread, by soft and mild arts . . . With gracious cunning Magnify small gifts; reduce the man to want a gift, and then give with pomp." Not until Dickens' *Bleak House* was the essential heartlessness of organized "benevolence" to receive such a scathing exposure.

IN BLAKE the religious, moral, artistic, and social impulses achieved a unique and fruitful tension. He was the last sectarian crank of the Puritan Revolution, and at the same time a post-Victorian. By reading Blake one can understand how the English could have produced both Milton and D. H. Lawrence. He combined the Puritan tradition of the spiritually strenuous life with a passionate devotion to what the Puritans

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most distrusted: "Naked Beauty." He was a working class revolutionary who hated cruelty and unmannerliness. (If Queen Charlotte ever read the "Dedication" of the "Grave" designs, its tone of affectionate courtesy must have startled and touched that unhappy woman.) Bursting with religious enthusiasm, he is constantly reminding us that a nation's moral vigor is not necessarily in direct proportion to the fervor shown by its moral vigilantes.

There is nothing misty, or purposely mystifying, about Blake's visionary inspiration. His ideal was always absolute clarity, the image incisively defined by the engraver's acid. "The great and golden rule of art, as well as of life, is this: That the more distinct, sharp, and wirey the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art." His attacks on Rembrandt and chiaroscuro, which might otherwise appear as mere personal crotchets, are connected with his idea that of all men the artist is the one who must come furthest out of hiding. One study of Blake is actually subtitled "a man without a mask."

Nor is his doctrine of the Imagination an invitation to the onlooker to lose himself in the pursuit of the nebulous and ineffable, as in the case of some of his contemporaries among the German Romantics. Rather it was an artist's insistence that the work of art was only realizable through its "minute particulars." If he called his inspiration "spiritual" in a sense that the modern reader may be tempted to translate as "spiritualistic," he also insisted that "spirits are organized men." "A Spirit and a Vision are not, as the modern (i.e. Baconian) philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour, or nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce." Nor need his strategy of overstatement disturb us. When Blake declared that there was only one side to a coin, he always meant the side not immediately visible.

His letters, unfortunately, do not throw much light on these fascinating paradoxes. Most of them are taken up with business matters, plans of pictures, acknowledgments of commissions or money, or with general comments on his health and temper. His patrons seem to have shared little of what he called his "Mental Strife." Although they remain good friends in time of need, they are vaguely uneasy in the face of his ideas. Even the admirable Butts, witty and eternally munificent on a very modest income, warns him that in the eyes of authority he is "a Sign to mark the residence of dim incredulity, haggard suspicion, and bloated philosophy."

The correspondence is also limited in point of time. Only four letters in the collection were written before Blake was forty, and the great bulk fall within the next ten years. The series does, however, contain one classic tragicomedy of human relationships, Blake's stay at Felpham as the *protégé* of William Hayley. Entered into with joyous hopes on Blake's part, the relation between pompous mediocrity and choleric genius ended with Blake's flight back to London when he felt he could no longer be "Pester'd with . . . Genteel Ignorance and Polite Disapprobation." The breach was, however, happily healed by Hayley's stout defense of his ex-*protégé* when Blake underwent his trial for sedition.

Blake's last twenty years in London were hard ones. "This city is a city of assassinations," he wrote, when he found himself facing old age with no appreciable reputation. But neglect did not dampen his cockney ebullience: "If God blesses me with health I doubt not yet to make a Figure in the Great Dance of Life that shall amuse the Spectators in the Sky." After this it is not surprising to learn that he died singing.

ST. BASIL TO THE ELDER HARMATIUS

My dear sir: Forgive me if an old
Man writes to you about your son. An old
Man is permitted to console
Even a stranger, and I write
To speak of consolation. Sir,
Your son is young and leaves your gods
To be exalted in our Christ:
Therefore you grieve, because your son
Flings from the house and will not eat
Your bread, though it was you who held
Him firmly against death and poverty
And much inconsequence. Perhaps
You will assert that he is yours
In flesh; that you begot that flesh
In sweetness that has made him sweet.
But all such honey of the sense
Is gall to the exalted soul.
Say he is yours, but also say
That he belongs to God, and God
Comes never like a thief to take
His own. Dear sir, take comfort
From a Christian, and take care
As well. If rumor of your village
Turns out true, you might do worse
Than bend a kinder head toward
Your son and us. Your neighbors look
On Christians lately with a gentle
Eye, and squint a little where you go.
Take care, for though we walk in harmless
Virtue in the nether-world,
I have observed that sometimes God
So orders things that even virtue
Tugs the reins in the affairs of men.

LEONARD WOLF.

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THE SCREEN

AFTER THE MOMENT OF GREATNESS

IN SPITE OF its not being as good as Irwin Shaw's original short story, "Tip on a Dead Jockey" is commendable and definitely a movie to be seen. Producer Edwin H. Knopf set no easy task for himself in filming Shaw's well-written and complicated story, for it presents, like many of F. Scott Fitzgerald's themes, plenty of problems for the visual medium. The film makers, in this case, have done the best they could, and their best is quite good. Depending more upon thought than upon action, "Tip on a Dead Jockey" is a director's picture more than an actor's picture, and Director Richard Thorpe has handled his carefully-chosen cast well.

The whole thing starts as a suspense story—with Dorothy Malone in Reno learning she cannot get a divorce even though her husband, whom she's not seen for two years, wrote from Madrid that he no longer wants to maintain their marriage. Dorothy hurries to Madrid to find out what has happened to her husband and why he wants to break up their marriage. In Madrid, Dorothy finds her husband (Robert Taylor) and his friends—all broke but having a whirl of a time like a group of expatriates right out of Hemingway. Living with Robert is his buddy and drinking companion (Marcel Dalio); and right across the street are Robert's close friend (Jack Lord) and his lovely wife (Gia Scala) to whom Robert is devoted. Hoping to rewin her husband, Dorothy joins in the fun, the drinking, the races. She even moves in with Robert and Dalio, and pays the rent.

But into this coterie of light-hearted friends comes a character (Martin Gabel) as sinister as any who has ever appeared in a movie; he's little and mean and dangerous, and thrives on the philosophy that a little man with money can be big. He offers Robert, who was an Air Force officer during the war, $25,000 to fly to Egypt and back on a smuggling job. Convinced that Gabel's villainy knows no bounds, Robert refuses; but his good friend Jack takes the job—and doesn't return. And then Dorothy learns why Robert is acting like a playboy who's not having fun. He can't forget the war and all those fliers he sent out on missions from which they didn't return. He's a bundle of fears. He's afraid to stay married. He feels safe only with Jack's wife who is safely in love with her own husband.

So far "Tip on a Dead Jockey" depends mostly on conversation, but it finally swings into action and becomes a story of regeneration. Perhaps this isn't exactly the story Irwin Shaw had in mind, but it makes an interesting and thoughtful movie.

NO WESTERN is worth its salt these days unless it has a theme song—preferably by Dimitri Tiomkin, whose theme song for "High Noon" became as popular as the film. In "Night Passage" Tiomkin has rung the bell twice, and both of the songs ("Follow the River" and "You Can't Get Far Without a Railroad" with lyrics by Ned Washington) are likely to become very familiar. Since it's a western, "Night Passage" is well-packed with action, but it also has an interesting script by Borden Chase, who took its theme about two brothers just seriously enough.

James Stewart portrays the good and older brother who lost his job as a payroll guard some five years ago when he was falsely accused of being a thief; since then he's been playing an accordion and living on dimes. Audie Murphy, as the bad brother, can't settle for dimes and is a trigger-happy member of a bandit gang that specializes in railroad payrolls. The clash between the brothers, which has been going on for years because Audie resents Jim's being pointed out as a model of goodness, grows greater when Jim rescues young Brandon deWilde from the bandit gang so the boy won't follow Audie's evil path. And the rift comes to a climax when Jim is hired by Jay C. Flippen to guard a payroll the gang plans to rob.

A couple of girls are involved in the proceedings: beautiful Elaine Stewart, described as "all silk and fine feathers," as Flippen's wife whose interest in Jim is nobly rebuffed; and Dianne Foster, whose affections for carefree Audie are eventually switched to careful Jim. But the girls serve mainly as added decoration in "Night Passage," which has stunning shots of Colorado photographed in Technicolor and wide-screen Technirama. The liveliest role is played by Dan Duryea as the bandit chief who adds humor to his villainy.

IF ANOTHER minor western called "Joe Dakota" turns up on the other half of your double bill, don't necessarily give it the go-by. It's no world beater as a movie, but it's interesting as a sort of poorman's "Bad Day at Black Rock." Jock Mahoney plays a stranger who comes into a desolate western town to look up an old Indian who asked for help. The Indian has disappeared and the townsfolk are sinking an oil well on his property. Only Luana Patten, as the younger daughter of the local storekeeper, is at all cooperative with Mahoney; and the mystery gets much thicker before Mahoney solves the perplexing riddle. Although Director Richard Bartlett shifts too easily between dead seriousness and lively flashes of humor, and the acting is pretty obvious (Charles McGraw as the menace, Barbara Lawrence as his fiancée, and many more as mean-spirited citizens) "Joe Dakota" has some worthwhile things to say about responsibility.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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LONELY PROTEST

A FEW WEEKS ago a reader said that I had a blind spot on Christian pacifism. He may well be right. I admit I have never been persuaded by the pacifists' arguments, and I have heard them all. However it is only fair to add that since Hiroshima I have been equally unimpressed by anti-pacifist arguments, and I have heard them all, too. For if the pacifists are guilty of arrant utopianism, they are not alone; the vaunted "realism" of their opponents has little to do with the realities of the nuclear age.

The moralists who talk of modern war as if it were subject to rational controls must know that their theories are the stuff of textbooks, no more. Sure as shooting, another general war will mean the use of nuclear weapons.

Even America dropped the atom bomb, and at a time when victory was within sight. What power, especially what totalitarian power, will hold off from using the hydrogen bomb with defeat in the offing?

I take for granted, then, that another general war will mean nuclear warfare and wreak unimaginable horror and destruction. What will follow from this destruction civilized men can not envisage. Certainly it will not be world order or "peace" as the word has been understood. And a war that does not reestablish order and peace is not a just war.

If you believe this, my pacifist friends ask, why aren't you with us? I have to answer with a "logic" that is not logical: I am not with you because I am involved in the general evil. I know that America's "militarism" has kept us from destruction. Under the stresses of the past decade, would the world still be intact if only the West knew the secret of nuclear war? I don't know. I am sure, though, that we would be wiped out if Russia alone had the secret. Therefore what peace we have had is the bitter fruit of mutual fear. I could not conscientiously advise the U. S. Government to strip itself of nuclear defenses. And as long as I want America to maintain these fearful weapons I must share the moral burden; I can not join the pacifists though I can be glad they are around to say no.

Such reasoning will not pass the test of textbook investigation. In an ethics-class debate I would lose my shirt. But it seems that the only way to win that debate would be to talk as if the traditional criteria for a just war were actually relevant; I know they are not. Or one could take the position that they are not relevant and urge the Government to dismiss the Marines; in the interests of peace, I am not willing to do that, either. So I will have to keep on losing arguments and count each day that Armaggedon is held off as another victory. That is a hell of a way to live. But, under the circumstances, no one can doubt that this is a hell of a world we live in.

None of these personal views is important except as a context in which to discuss the imprisonment of Dorothy Day and ten of her followers. The Catholic Worker people were jailed because they refused to take shelter during an air-raid drill. They refused in order to protest against the very moral dilemma that leaves me—and my pacifist friends too, for that matter—without a debater's point to our names.

I don't know what to do about the dilemma. If the pacifists actually had responsibility, I don't believe they would, either. But Dorothy Day and her friends want to do something. They are not like me; they are not willing to live without a murmur in a morally ambiguous situation. I think they have more faith in God than I do; I know they have more faith in men. By the simple act of resisting the nation's periodic preparations for doomsday they hope to point up the importance of life over death.

Whether the Government may declare a synthetic "emergency" and suspend civil rights for the duration of a period arbitrarily set by decree should surely interest the upper courts. But it would do less than justice to Dorothy to treat the affair as a civil-liberties case. Miss Day acts in the spirit of the prophets; she is indifferent to legalities. Only a plea of guilty made sense to her, for she and her friends saw their protest not as an exercise of a civil "right" but as a religous duty; imprisonment was something to be accepted not as a legal injustice but as "penance" for the sins of the world.

Imagine surviving a hydrogen bomb and, sitting among the ruins, remembering the case of Dorothy Day and her friends. With millions dead and other millions grotesquely injured, what would we think then about their small, pitiful effort to cry out their protest in the days when we rehearsed for annihilation? Who among the survivors would have an unkind word to say about their lack of "prudence"? How would the echo of the Judge's words—"a heartless bunch"—sound to those in the wasteland?

They were sent to jail because out of the ten million they alone said no; they took their harmless soap-box way to say that something has to be done. And, to our shame, there was scarcely a protest from the Catholics of America when one we call a saint was put behind bars. She protested against the destruction of mankind. Those who protest against risqué movies are given Catholic Action medals.

JOHN COGLEY.

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COMMUNICATIONS

"ARREST OF THE PACIFISTS"

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The sentiments expressed in The Commonweal's editorial concerning the refusal of Dorothy Day and her followers to take shelter during a Civil Defense drill [July 26] are admirable, but they are an inadequate answer to some practical questions that must be asked in considering the legal attitude toward actions such as that of Miss Day's.

Certainly, it was thoughtless and rash of Magistrate Bayer to call the group, "a heartless bunch of individuals who breathe contempt of the law," in sentencing them. For no one who knows Miss Day's record as a humanitarian could accuse her of being heartless. However, in essence, isn't it true that anyone who wilfully chooses to disobey a law designed for the common good breathes "contempt of the law": a high-minded, selfless contempt, perhaps, but contempt, nonetheless? Moreover, isn't there always the danger, were only one exception to be granted to such a law, that, in time, numerous misguided idealists and representatives of the lunatic fringe of anarchism would be taking advantage of such leniency to stage similar displays of civil disobedience? And the result could only be disastrous.

I cannot help but feel that the persecution Miss Day and her followers are suffering and have suffered in the past is intimately a part of the pattern of life they have chosen for themselves. Certainly, they expected no less; and, had they been treated with restraint, they would have been denied the chance for the moral victory they so ardently are seeking.

D. K. DOUGHERTY.

Ontario, Canada

TO the Editors: Your editorial "Arrest of the Pacifists" (July 26) forcefully recalled the protest of last year. For some men and women, July 20, 1956, was a testing day for something more important than atomic weapons. It was a moment of truth about convictions and courage. The long talks about anarchism and pacifism and the need for a Personalist Revolution were on trial. So were the long talkers.

Dorothy Day sat out there in Washington Square Park. So did Ammon Hennacy and Dean Mowrer and Stan Borowski. Other members of the Catholic Worker staff had been asked to stay home to run the house and the paper. Dorothy was talking into a network microphone when the wail of the sirens gave a realistic background to her words of peace. It is too much to expect that this particular recording should find a place among the propaganda selection of news fed the nation. But one hopes it is preserved somewhere.

Police came along to clear the streets and we, the many, separated ourselves from the few. There was no carnival atmosphere about the group we left, no melodramatic posing of a grand gesture. They were grave, Dorothy and Ammon and Dean and the rest, slightly strained and unsmiling as they had been all day. A year in jail lay ahead of them and the ignominy of popular accusation of having acted against the commonweal. If any of us had ever said "Ammon and Dorothy want to go to jail. They get a bang out of it." the words were rising now in our throats to choke us.

We allowed ourselves to be shooed away, knowing we did not belong. Proud to claim association with them, confusedly ashamed at deserting them, we climbed a few steps and took refuge in the Faculty Club of New York University. There was an air of proper academic comfort and security in the lounge. It seemed a pity that the theoretic bombs had at that moment blasted into grave-dust this erudite room and all the bright arguments that had bounced from its walls.

We watched through venetian blinds as fifteen policemen moved in on the seventeen who dared say "No!" to the State. They swept their victims towards a huddle of newsmen and photographers who backed up on their heels ahead of the group, popping pictures and directing the police how to act like men taking in prisoners. The wagon was so full that two policemen stood on the back step with arms interlocked to keep the overflow from spilling out.

The all-clear went and we stumbled into the street exchanging excuses. "I have married a wife. My fields must be ploughed. I wanted to go but Dorothy forbade it. I am not an American citizen."

One said, "I am a pacifist but not that much of a pacifist." Another said, "I am a coward" and the rest were glad somebody had put it into words.

The few were charged and taken to cells to wait the opening of Night Court. We who had refused the moment filled in the time talking inanities while our

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minds paced their own cells of futility and indecision. Two of us went to St. Joseph's and took our thoughts to another Prisoner. Some went back to Chrystie Street and tried to pretend it was like any other Friday evening. Others paced streets pointlessly, unwilling to break the bruised thread that tied them to the men and women they had left sitting in Washington Square Park.

We met again in the courtroom and saw them line up before the red-haired, youthful-looking Judge Stone. Dorothy, Ammon, Dean, Stan and the rest, our people standing for judgment on us. To taut nerves it seemed an interminable time before they appeared in the corridor to finish the business of getting out on a hundred-dollar bail until Wednesday's trial. A policeman made them line up two-by-two and be counted before he marched them along to the Complaint Room.

After two more hours of blank-minded standing-by we went to see them sitting with the patience of the poor waiting to be disposed of by a higher power. What did we say to them? What could we say? "How did it go, Ammon?" "Was it much of an ordeal, Dean?" "Why did Stan refuse bail?" "Are you coming out to the farm tonight, Dorothy?"

They consoled us. They absolved us in small words spoken with gentleness and understanding about trivial things.

We went home.

It was a mock air-raid on July 20, 1956, even a mockery of an air-raid. But it was a real test.

And there were more casualties than the five million theoretic corpses. A number of half-pacifists, half-anarchists, half-personalists were left with only one honest subject to discuss—whether it was their conviction or their courage that had died.

J. G. SHAW.

AN APPEAL

Father Joseph Taffarel, a Jesuit missioner in southern India, writes that he needs four hundred and fifty dollars to dig a deep well. He has a hundred destitute orphans in his charge, and the nearest drinking water is over a mile away. "How to get such a big sum when I have debts to pay, when I can't make both ends meet, when I have not even money to pay for the rice we eat?" Donations may be sent direct (Airmail: 25¢) to Rev. Joseph Taffarel, S.J., Fatima Mission, Thavam P.O., North Malabar, India, or c/o Jesuit Missions, 45 East 78th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

BOOKS

Insight into the German Mind

THE RETURN OF GUNNER ASCH. By Hans Hellmut Kirst. Little, Brown. $3.95.

By WILLIAM JAMES SMITH

"I DIDN'T believe in our cause and yet I allowed my men to be sacrificed. We all knew that a gigantic crime was being perpetrated, but with a few honorable exceptions none of us did anything about it. . . . We spoke of the Nazis with contempt among ourselves, but we should have proclaimed our contempt for them to their faces and before all the world. . . . This war of ours was a crime, and since I helped to wage it I am indeed a war criminal."

Thus speaks the stern but lovable old General Luschke in *The Return of Gunner Asch* as he turns back to the American prison camp from which he has been freed in the last hours of the war by a group of devoted underlings—among them Gunner Asch, now Lieutenant Asch, and Corporal Kowalski, Asch's incorrigible side-kick. And thus ends the "comedy" of Gunner Asch's wry adventures with the German war machine. The very last word, however, is reserved for the village priest who prays that war may never come again. He receives no answer.

The Return of Gunner Asch is the concluding novel of a trilogy which has proved enormously popular in Germany and throughout Europe. A film version made in Germany is due for release shortly in this country. Nominally Gunner Asch's story is a comedy, but it is comedy of a bitter kind—the comedy of hypocrisy and opportunism and greed that flourish as inevitable adjuncts to war. It is the comedy of the turncoat and the cheat, the windbag, the con man and the dupe —the comedy of the pratfall that ends up with a broken neck.

The American reader will approach Gunner Asch and his adventures with a special interest. If nothing else, it will throw some light on that phenomenon that baffled many an American in occupied Germany—the fact that though Germany was famous as the home of National Socialism there was not a single Nazi to be found when the American troops arrived. Cynical GI's were inclined to be skeptical of this almost universal anti-Hitlerian sentiment. The only good word any American ever heard of Hitler was that he had built the *Autobahnen*. However, in the light of subsequent history, as it is illustrated, for example, in Gunner Asch's story, American cynicism may have been excessive.

In a very real sense there were no Nazis left when the Americans arrived. Every single German had been touched by the magic wand of hard facts and transmogrified — deeply and sincerely—into an ardent supporter of the League of Women Voters and the Little Sisters of the Poor and the Town Meeting of the Air and the Ideals of the Cricket Field. By the time the war was over every German could re-

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member clearly how he had foreseen disaster and how he had deplored Hitlerian excesses. Whether these memories would have loomed large in the German mind in the event of German victory is, of course, another matter. And Author Kirst, to give him his due, is not so naive as to suggest that contemporary German soul-searching is not largely a matter of historical accident.

Mr. Kirst manages more than one significant insight into the German mind, military and otherwise. His entire work is a commentary, and an explicit one, on that peculiar quality of the German personality that demands either to dominate or be dominated—declining any middle ground between servility and autocracy. But there are other, and perhaps darker, aspects of the German mind that he does not deal with so explicitly. For all his insight and for all his essential decency, Mr. Kirst's attitudes, or those of his spokesman, the truculent Gunner, have their disquieting aspects. His story has been called a condemnation of the Fascist military machine. Perhaps this is correct, but Gunner Asch does not revolt so much against the machine itself as against those selfish elements in it — Fascist or otherwise — which prevented it from operating as the splendid boys' club it properly should have been—and was, until an upstart Corporal took it over for world conquest.

This, however, is not a point which deserves emphasis, though it looms larger in this third volume of the trilogy than previously. The story of the last volume revolves around the betrayal, by the monstrous Colonel Hauk and his sadistic lieutenant, of a loyal little contingent of the Wehrmacht, including Asch and Major Hinrichsen, the innocently idealistic Nazi. Asch and Hinrichsen have their revenge, and it is easy to overlook the fact that this revenge, for all that it is properly "sporting," is just about as bloodthirsty as Colonel Hauk himself.

All in all the story hardly seems the material of which comedy is made, and yet there are moments of high comedy, indeed, as in the preposterous scheming for the arrival of the Americans—putting the right people in jail so they can be conveniently "liberated" by the conquerors, laying in supplies of sausages and cognac, the unquenchable ardor of the Hitler Jugend. Most of the army humor is Standard Brand—the GI's fantasy of telling off his CO, the supply sergeant's wonderful horde of goodies, the crusty old General (Oscar Homulka) with a heart of 14-carat gold—all perfectly familiar, but good of its kind. The translation was made for the British edition and rings rather oddly on American ears. A singularly stilted rendering of German soldier-talk doesn't help.

Germany has been turning out war novels by the carload in the past few years. Many of these, *Gunner Asch* among them, have proven enormously popular in Germany. None of them has been more than moderately successful in the United States. Partly this has been because most of them have gone in more heavily for blood and cosmic cries than character or story. *Gunner Asch* deserves a better reception. It tells a good story and its characters, though no more than two-dimensional, are wonderfully vivid. If it does not offer anything ultimate in the way of wisdom, it has at least that honesty that is wisdom's best substitute.

Art or Manifesto?

THE TAXIS OF THE MARNE. By Jean Dutourd. Simon and Schuster. $3.50.

By WILLIAM ESTY

FRANCOPHOBE: I see on the dust jacket that Dutourd's *The Taxis of the Marne* is "the most talked-about book . . . in Paris." These French, what a *bore!* It's none of my business if they want to make literary hysteria into a major industry, but I wish we Americans wouldn't feel obliged to help close the dollar gap by importing its products. A "handbook of patriotism"! Just what France needs today! Back to *la gloire*, back to Kléber and the Commune and the horizon-blue uniform. Of all the absurd. . . .

Gallomane: Yes, as absurd as Jeremiah's God thundering "My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit." How naïve, to ascribe all Israel's misfortunes to her own wickedness! Dutourd knows, like the prophet, that the physical collapse of a great nation is preceded by moral collapse, whatever "causes" historians may cite. "The Lord afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions . . . the crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!" Dutourd puts his finger on the essentials that escape the statistician, the rot of cowardice, evasion, laziness. He sees that rot still devouring a once great-souled country: "There is an element of baseness in being happy today in France . . . we are living among the material comforts of a great nation but we have no honor."

F: Don't obscure the issue with your Biblical tags, my dear Guillaume. The case against France, on which Dutourd's vilification rests, boils down to the fact that she lost her war with the most powerful military machine the world had yet seen. And the "greatness of soul" he prescribes is that of—Napoleon, whose activities set the French economy back half a century! It *is* naïve to see the French defeat of 1940 and the weaknesses of France's position today as simply the result of the triumph of Anatole France and Gide over the spirit of Marshal Ney. That's coming close to the Pétainism Dutourd detests. 1940 was, viewed historically, the virtually inevitable result of France's having been bled white in the first War, of Britain's and America's demoralizing foreign policies between the wars, and of Nazi superiority in population, industrial resources, and mechanized mobility.

G: Do you doubt that Dutourd is right when he says that "Since 1939, at least thirty generals have deserved to be shot?" (". . . these useless Radical-Socialist or Fascist generals who had prospered like cockroaches between the disjoined floor boards of the Staff College.") Or when he calls the army of 1940

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"a sort of undulating ectoplasm cast lightly over the land of our fathers, a veil, a vapor of men," and remarks that "the vocation of this army was not battle but captivity?"

F. (impatiently): To be sure. But I can't see that courage in 1940 could have made any real difference . . . anyway, it's when he talks about the France of today that Dutourd really goes off the rails. A lot of name-calling and ranting about moral sickness, colorful no doubt, but fundamentally useless, a form of escapism, a way of dodging the hard, dull tasks that really want doing in France in 1957. D. W. Brogan and Herbert Luethy are right: what France needs is to shake off that paralyzing preoccupation with her past, the old grudges and the old glories, and buckle down to the job of developing her internal economy, freeing it from the artificial stagnation of protected inefficiency; she must complete her industrial revolution, give the constructive forces of the market freer play. . . .

G.: Thanks, Frank, I'll bone up on all that in *The Economist*. At least you'll admit that the denunciatory rhetoric is superb. *Taxis* is a really exhilarating book to read, as brilliantly written as his *The Best Butter*. Didn't you think his remarks on the "sentimental collusion" between the "maggot-ministers," those "sick-nurses," and the electorate, struck home? And his imprecations on the "glorification of failure" in modern France? What about those wonderfully savage passages on the French idea of intelligence as inertia, as an end in itself, as "this Radical-Socialist grandmother disguised as the Princess of Cléves"? There Dutourd soars, *and* speaks the truth as well. And those sword-thrusts against the spirit of unbuttoned Bohemianism in France today. . .

F. (drily): Yes, the French do love verbal violence, don't they? Especially the intellectuals. Dutourd was splendid in *The Best Butter*, which expresses all the same opinions, but as art, not as a manifesto. But then, being a French intellectual, a mandarin, he couldn't stay just a good novelist, he *had* to try his hand at direct, public pronouncement. Thank God, we don't encourage our own writers in such displays, except when they're drunk in the Stork Club or receiving a Nobel Prize. . . Guillaume, old boy, your *Taxis* is simply *not* to be taken seriously. It's riddled with contradictions—the Germans are first "trembling" Nazi guttersnipes, then "men"; Dutourd inveighs against romantic *panache*, but also against "realism"—I could add other examples, but what's the use? The book's a mere self-indulgent diatribe, offering no coherent account of the past, nor remedy for the present. Except "cruel and intolerant patriotism"! I wish he'd stop intoning the sacred names Valmy, Iéna, Austerlitz, Wagram, Marne, Verdun long enough to see where his "cruel patriotism" is getting France in Algeria.

G.: Patriotism aside, I wonder whether the appeal to rigor as against disorder, to effort as against inertia, to character as against ideology, above all, to harsh self-knowledge as against self-deception —I wonder whether all this is really so naïve, so beside the point? And not only for France! When Dutourd speaks of "the frivolous anarchy of (our) times," of "the indulgent and utilitarian morality of countries which have ceased to believe in their national destiny," we citizens of what the GI's affectionately called Uncle Sugar might listen. . . . And Frank, even a reader like you who rejects *in toto* Dutourd's indictments must take pleasure in the patches of pure description, the novelist's eye that gives us the warm sky, the nut trees and the showers which were also part of that disastrous summer of 1940 in Brittany. *Taxis* contains, besides sulphurous denouncings, that old peasant tenderly stuffing the bewildered deserter with greasy pâté. And phrases like "a sort of Protestant beauty" to describe the infantry fighting of World War I. . .

F.: Yes, and that insufferable bit about Dutourd not getting himself killed in Brittany because he realized he was destined to write novels after the Occupation! A regular little St. Paul, with his vision.

G.: Philistine!

F.: Mushhead!

Difficult Beauty

A LEGACY. By Sybille Bedford. Simon and Schuster. $3.50.

By RICHARD HAYES

IN THIS chronicle of a distant Germany, the English Mrs. Sybille Bedford achieves, by de-

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sign and necessity, what may be called in the language of formal aesthetics, difficult beauty. *A Legacy* permits no ease of assumption or access: it bristles with obliquity, delights in a manner elliptical and chastely baroque, full of passionate eccentricity. The dominant tone is imposed not by an arbitrary single style, but by a mode of seeing—that of the montage. Images dissolve; inferences echo; reality, tangible and solid, is splintered into a thousand refractions. Yet there is no blurring: those same echoes and images and refractions, luminous or harsh, are fixed with a decision and exactitude one must compare to the pointilliste technique of a painter such as Seurat.

It is possible finally to discuss *A Legacy* only in terms of its "style," and this I take to be a mark of its arresting superiority. The terms which Mrs. Bedford proposes, by indirection and—I do not doubt — intent, are specifically those of painting. Not for nothing does one of the novel's most achieved personages—the mundane Sarah Merz, a figure of Jamesian presence—find solace and power in collecting the early Impressionists; neither is it irrelevant that a crucial delineation of attitude should revolve about the disparate impact of a Pissaro landscape on two women. Twin Persian cats, idols in china which Jules, the grave futile dandy, gives to his overstuffed in-laws, are revealed at the end, with a deft symbolic tact, to be fakes.

One is conscious of the gallery of portraits which richly embellish *A Legacy*. The Riviera luncheon party, early in the novel, seems to me one of the scenic triumphs of modern fiction, the power of which lies not so much in density of consciousness or feeling, as in a voluptuous tactility and scalding clarity of color. The peach trees and the slopes feathery with mimosa; the pink marble under a trellis of mulberry; Jules in a tussore jacket and black Spanish straw hat, holding up in the aromatic, brilliant sunshine a sea bass all marked in deep indigo and maroon; and the pet monkey, curled grotesquely against the striped silk of a young girl's dress. Mrs. Bedford underscores the image by invoking Watteau, yet the radiant ecstasy and animation of the scene are wholly the fruit of her love.

Mrs. Bedford shares with the great painters the elusive power of making things felt by their absence. *A Legacy* has, in the vulgar sense, no "subject." It commemorates a moment of poise in time—post-Bismarck Germany—and the small expediency (or is it that? or crime, or cowardice, or insensibility?) which fastens and festers, sapping the years though leaving the days untouched, and bringing all finally—so many alien spheres—to ruin and attrition. One may expand the private tragedy into symbolic proportions, and Mrs Bedford would not resist: "the course of self-interest is seen as a beeline only at the moment," she writes, "and the history of individuals, groups, and countries is the sum of these."

What rather interests her are the disparate ways of coping with reality, and she excels in recording the history of the will, its varieties and degrees. Indeed, *A Legacy* decisively illumines Mr. Lionel Trilling's insistence that the novel is centrally a documentation of the will in action. Mrs. Bedford's melancholy realism is nowhere more evident than in her perception of the extremities to which people will go to evade the will; it is comparably acute in her perception of the cruelties wrought by the corrupted will. Jules, the exquisite anachronism, is baffled by a world he never made into crying out at the last: *You are not on my side!* But judgment is upon him too, for that same languid, wilful impotence does not destroy him alone: with serene and decorous fatality, it does to death his fragile wife who, breaking the circle of sottish comfort in which she had been bred, pitted her fierce will of love against his massive inertia—and lost. Again, the supple young

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Johannes—*"un brave coeur,"* the old Jesuit says of him, "at one with the brute creation"—is ceremoniously sacrificed, not alone to a soulless Prussian delight in pure will, but to the indifference of his family, trapped in their fantasies of love, acquisitiveness and power.

These two episodes vibrate with a special gravity and pain: the passion is all in the pity, and one has the sense that, momentarily, Mrs. Bedford's imagination is checked by the savage ineluctability of experience. "Life," she writes, in a passage which startles with its choral echoes, "life is never as bad nor as good as one thinks. Never as bad, never as good. . . . When? At the instant of calamity, at the edge of fear? when the bad news is brought, and the trap felt sprung, or the loss strikes home? At low ebb, in tedium, in accidie? In the moments of renewal? the transfiguration of love, the flush of work, the grace of a new vision, the long-held now? Or later, when the doors shut, one after another, and regret moves in the heart like a steel coil? Never as good, never as bad, but a drab, bearable half-sleep banked by a little store of this and that, subsiding after visitations and alarms, a drowsing, often not uneasy, down the years, an even-paced irreversible passage—life, the run of lives, the sum of life? Is it consoling? is it the whole truth? Is it inevitable?"

The voice troubles: it hints of man sheltering from the abyss, of the sifting mockeries of love and the sterile illusions of power. But it is chastened by another, noble and classic, and insisting equally that while reality may whip, it need not paralyze. Indeed, *A Legacy* contains, even in its title, the seed of choice, the theme of conscious inheritance and bequest; it is this subtle but energetic idea of the good which gives the novel its note of wry, angular moral beauty. For while the men of Mrs. Bedford's world never come to see themselves nor what they have wrought, its women—the mundane Sarah, the volatile Caroline, and Jeanne, so amiable, tender and disreputable—wait patiently on time and fashion out of it responsibility and secure wisdom: the knowledge that wealth and taste impose their own conditions; that it is much, after all, to be able to love without expecting return, and that life is richer, darker, happily more terrible than is dreamt of in any Prussian philosophy of will as power.

This novel, so pungent, so serene, so abstinent yet full, so oblique and so unerring, casts a wide net. There lies within it, lucidly recorded, something of what Mr. Stark Young has called the cruelty that nobody was to blame. And it asks, with minted freshness and passionate control, the old questions: Is it consoling? Is it the whole truth? Is it inevitable?

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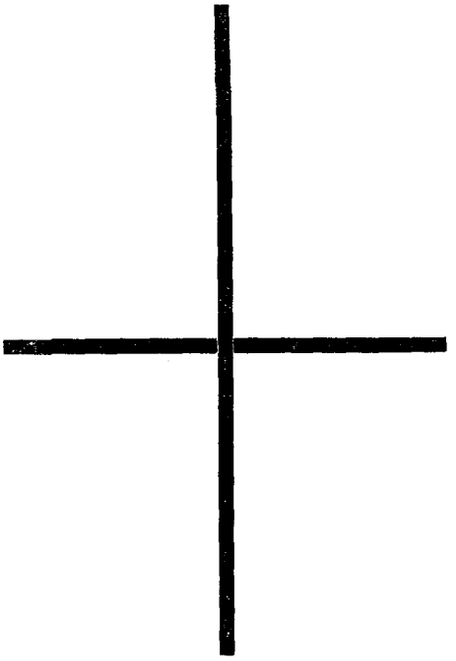

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